

Trade Notes...

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China Approves Final Safety Certificates for U.S. Biotech Products

In February, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture completed its biotechnology regulatory review and granted safety certificates for Roundup Ready soybeans, two corn products and two cotton products. This is the first time China has granted permanent approval for imports of food products derived from biotechnology. This should assure continued U.S. access to this important market. China is the top foreign customer for U.S. soybeans and cotton. In fact, so far this year, more than one-third of total U.S. soybean sales exports are expected to have gone to China. In fiscal 2003, U.S. agricultural exports to China reached a record of nearly \$3.5 billion, in large part due to the best ever exports of soybeans, which reached nearly \$1.8 billion, exceeding total U.S. agricultural exports to China for the previous year. U.S. cotton sales to China also rose significantly, amounting to more than \$419 million, compared to \$67.9 million the previous year.

USDA Opens Registration for Export Directory of U.S. Food Companies

U.S. companies may now register to be included in the Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies. The directory provides information on U.S. suppliers of mixed containers of grocery and/or food service products. The project targets emerging markets that cannot support large single-product shipments. The directory is used by foreign buyers and FAS offices worldwide. Inclusion in the directory is free of charge; however, only U.S. companies that offer mixed containers will be allowed to register for this service. The directory will be updated periodically, and registration is an ongoing process. The registration form can be downloaded from the FAS Web site at: www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/Directory/Main.html

Russia Updates Import Standards and Guidelines

The Russian Federation has put in place a clearer process for food imports that could help U.S. exporters. The revised regulations have clarified documentation and testing requirements for many agricultural imports. Nutritional labeling requirements are now less stringent for some items, and caloric value is no longer required. Detailed hygiene and nutritional requirements have been added for foods for infants and children and for diet products. Labeling is required for biotechnology products. Hygiene norms are simplified for some product groups, reducing required testing. Amended trademark, service mark and labeling regulations ensure better protection for companies. There are also updated limits for pesticide residues and other contaminants in foods. For more information, contact the FAS Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Moscow, Russia; Tel.: (011-7-095) 728-5222; Fax: (011-7-095) 728-5133; E-mail: mcmacklet@state.gov

First European Buyers Mission to Hawaii

In January, the FAS Office of Agricultural Affairs in Paris, France, organized a French buyers mission to Hawaii sponsored by the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association. The mission, which generated estimated sales of \$1.25 million, included seven buyers. French buyers were looking for products such as fresh and frozen seafood, tropical fruits, cut flowers, fresh herbs, coffee, dried fruits and gourmet foods. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture organized meetings for the buyers with producers and processors.